

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:

receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting contact during an ongoing instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts; and
determining at least one of whether the interrupting contact has an interrupt priority ranking higher than, or at least as high as, an interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts participating in the ongoing instant messaging conversation and whether an interrupting conversation has a higher priority compared to the ongoing instant messaging conversation; and

interrupting the ongoing instant messaging conversation in response to a predetermined one of the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting contact having a selected interrupt priority ranking relative to an interrupt priority ranking of being higher than, or at least as high as, the interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts participating in the ongoing instant messaging conversation or an and the interrupting conversation having a higher interrupt priority ranking compared to an the interrupt priority ranking of the ongoing instant messaging conversation.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting a precedence between interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting contact relative to the interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts and the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting conversation relative to the interrupt priority ranking of the instant messaging conversation.

3. Canceled

4. Canceled

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a contact busy message to the interrupting contact in response to at least one of the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting contact having an interrupt priority ranking being no higher than the interrupt priority ranking of each of the at least two contacts or and the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting conversation having an interrupt priority ranking being no higher than the interrupt priority ranking of the ongoing instant messaging conversation.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

presenting a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of the interrupting conversation in a foreground of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation; and

transferring a keyboard focus to a type-in box of the interrupting conversation in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising presenting a graphical user interface (GUI) representation of the instant messaging conversation in a background of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending an interrupt notification to any of the at least two contacts of the instant messaging conversation not contacted by the interrupting contact in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising resuming the instant messaging conversation in response to the interrupting conversation being completed.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising setting an instant messaging conversation priority.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising selectively blocking interrupts.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising overriding an interrupts block.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising assigning an interrupt priority ranking to all contacts in an instant messaging contacts list in a user's communications device.
14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein assigning an interrupt priority ranking comprises one of assigning the interrupt priority ranking by placing all contacts in a predetermined order in [a] the contact list or auxiliary contact list on the user's communications device or and by assigning a contact priority number to each contact in the contact list.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising deriving an interrupt priority ranking for each contact from a Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP LDAP) or from a reporting chain.
16. (Currently Amended) A method for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:
 - receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting contact during an ongoing instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts;
 - interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on a set of interrupt rules, wherein interrupting the instant messaging conversation based on the set of interrupt rules comprises:

permitting the ongoing instant messaging conversation to be interrupted in response to interrupts being selectively permitted; and
determining that the interrupting conversation has an interrupt priority ranking higher than an interrupt priority ranking of the ongoing conversation; and
sending an interrupt blocked message to the interrupting contact in response to interrupts being selectively blocked.

17-19 Canceled

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising presenting a GUI representation of the interrupting conversation in a foreground of a display in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

21. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising sending an interrupt notification to any of the at least two contacts of the instant messaging conversation not contacted by the interrupting contact in response to interrupting the instant messaging conversation.

22-39 Canceled

Please add new claims 40-46.

40. (New) A method for managing interrupts in an instant messaging application, comprising:

receiving an interrupt request from an interrupting contact or user during an ongoing instant messaging conversation between at least two contacts or users;

determining whether the interrupting contact or user has an interrupt priority ranking in a contacts list higher than, or at least as high as, a priority ranking of each of

the at least two contacts or users in the contacts list participating in the ongoing instant messaging conversation; and

interrupting the ongoing instant messaging conversation in response to the interrupt priority ranking of the interrupting contact or user being higher than, or at least as high as, each of the at least two contacts or users.

41. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising dividing the contacts list into a primary contacts list and a normal contacts list, wherein the primary contacts list permits a user to specify the interrupt priority ranking for selected contacts by listing contacts in an order according to their respective interrupt priority order and wherein the normal contacts lists contacts alphabetically.

42. (New) The method of claim 41, further comprising blocking the contacts on the normal contacts list and that are not on the primary contacts list from interrupting the ongoing instant messaging conversation.

43. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising indicating in the contacts list when a contact is online and available to enter into a new instant messaging conversation.

44. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising representing the contacts list as a graphical user interface including a table comprising one column for indicating an online status of each contact in the contacts lists and another column for an interrupt priority ranking of each contact.

45. (New) The method of claim 44, further comprising assigning a numerical value to each contact that specifies the interrupt priority ranking of each contact.

46. (New) The method of claim 40, further comprising presenting a graphical user interface to each participant in an active instant messaging conversation, wherein the graphical

user interface comprises an input means to enter or select a priority of the active instant messaging conversation.